

Stamford School Readiness Council (SRC)
Education Committee Meeting
Monday, December 3, 2012
12:00 p.m.
United Way of Western CT

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance:

Sonja Ahuja	Liasion, Graustein Memorial Fund
Chelsea Bourne	Student, University of Connecticut
Karen Brennan	Stamford Discovery Coordinator, United Way of Western CT
Anne Farrell, Chair	Associate Professor, Human Development & Family Studies, UConn
Sadie Green Carter	President/Director, Mother's Little Helper
Jennifer Hallissey	Vice President, Education, United Way of Western CT
Polly Rauh	President, Stamford Board of Education
Michele Sabia	Curriculum Associate/Early Childhood Education, Stamford Public Schools
Margo Sandahl	Instructional Coordinator, Stamford Public Schools
Dori Walker	Instructional Coordinator, Stamford Public Schools
Karen Wenz	Director, First Presbyterian Church Nursery School

Anne welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for their support over the past year, especially during the spring during Anne's sabbatical and during the early fall in planning for the Powerful Interactions workshop.

Focus Group Study, Chelsea Bourne

Chelsea joined the meeting via conference call and shared details of the focus group work to date:

- There have been five focus groups with a total of 45 participants since September. Another 30 participants will be interviewed by December 14. The goal is about 100.
- Participants have been primarily from the southwestern part of the state – Westport, Stamford, East Haven, and Groton.
- All audio transcripts will be complete by mid-February and then data analysis will take place after that. Mary Tabb will be assisting in reliability testing and the preliminary analysis.
- Early data shows that teachers have an interest in mentoring opportunities, are using the preschool assessment frameworks in their classrooms, and are concerned about the upcoming changes in accreditation. Compensation remains high on the list of priorities for all teachers.
- It's been a struggle finding teachers to participate. As a follow up, we have put Chelsea in touch with Karen Wenz and the Stamford Preschool Director's Group, the focus group flyer was redistributed to Council, and a message was posted to the Discovery listserv.

Powerful Interactions Conference Wrap Up

A full summary was distributed to the Committee in advance of the meeting. Please see that document. Anne highlighted a few key statistics/findings:

- The group of participants had an extensive amount of teaching experience, ranging from 6-20 years in the early childhood field.
- All components of the conference received high marks.
- Participants were pleased with the amount of time they had with Judy and enjoyed the small group work in the breakout sessions.
- Many participants reported feeling the day was of great value and that we treated them well.
- Almost everyone liked Judy's straightforward approach and felt it could easily be used in their everyday work.
- In the two Next Steps sessions held for leadership professionals, there was a lot of interest in continuing the work with Judy.

Judy is open to any number of possibilities, including coaching our facilitator to implement a train the trainer type model. As a next step, Anne is going to have a follow up discussion with Judy to see what might be possible and will report back at next month's meeting. She will also follow up with FCAEYC to see what their annual conference plans might be and whether we could partner with them in any way.

Strategic Planning, Sonja Ahuja

Sonja joined us to begin a dialogue with the Committee on directions we might pursue in the coming year. She conducted a series of exercises designed to get us thinking about what our top priorities and issues are.

The top three areas the Committee discussed pursuing are:

- (1) **Expand professional development capacity** (e.g., collaborating with FCAEYC to bring the Powerful Interactions work to more early childhood professionals, "bookmark" with Judy Jablon our desire to continue the conversation about coaching as a form of professional development, formulate a set of questions and objectives that we would want to pursue inside a coaching endeavor, consult with Judy on how to make this happen, and consider fundraising, sponsorship and related development efforts that will provide resources for this.
- (2) **Reinforce shared vision for Kindergarten transition.**
- (3) **Establish district wide pre-K to 3 early literacy plan.** It is clear we need to take our lead from the State, as they are being more vocal with the new standards coming soon.

It was agreed that at our next meeting we would dive deeper into discussing what the Kindergarten transition plan currently looks like and what more we can be doing.

NOTE: Our next meeting is Monday, January 28 from 12:00-1:30 p.m. Location TBD.